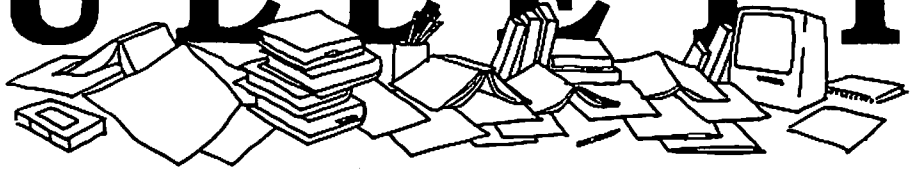
THE LITERACY MATERIALS

BULLETIN



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Fall 1991

The Literacy Materials Committee has been notified that we have received cost-shared funding to continue our work. This funding will allow the committee to meet on a regular basis, purchase and select materials, field test, and publish the reviews in the *Literacy Materials Bulletin.* We hope we will be able to make the bulletins as useful as possible to practitioners in the field. We would appreciate receiving any suggestions you might have for improving the bulletin.

We have field tested and reviewed a number of native materials in this issue and plan to focus on family literacy in the next issue. If you have any relevant materials you would like to recommend, please fill out the form on the back of this bulletin and send it to me.

We will continue to put two copies of each material reviewed into the circulating collection of the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development.

If you wish to borrow any of the materials reviewed in this issue, contact:

Sally Coates-Crews
Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development
Fifth Floor
1483 Douglas Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 3K4

Tel: (604) 387-6060
Fax: (604) 387-9142

The materials are available on a loan basis for a period of a month. When ordering, please specify that it is a material from the *Literacy Materials Bulletin.*

A complete set of the print materials from the last four bulletins is available at the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.

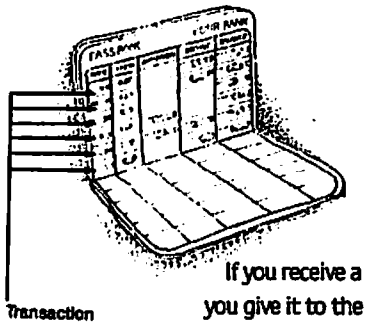
Joan Acosta

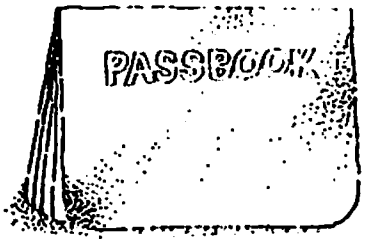
Joan Acosta
Chairperson

Literacy Materials Committee

Joan Acosta
Capilano College
986-3945
Barbara Bate
Fraser Valley College
792-0025
Paula Davies
College of New Caledonia
561-5835
Lorraine Fox
Native Tutoring Centre
874-0664
Laurie Gould
Vancouver Community College, KEC
875-6111, local 498
Andrew Kennedy
Camosun College
370--3324
Basha Rahn
Sooke School District
474-2175
Maureen Stephens
Okanagan College
762-5445
Loraine Wong
Langley School District
534-0333

RESOURCE PERSON:
Thomas Quigley
Vancouver Public Library
665-3594





Transaction

If you receive a **passbook**, it will be brought up to date every time you give it to the teller. This passbook lists all the action that has taken place in your account.

Each action is called a **transaction** and has a special code. The codes and what they mean are written on the first page (where your account number is also written). Other pages are used to show the transactions. Your responsibilities are listed on the last page of the passbook.

Every time money goes in or comes out, the date, the transaction code, and the balance (the amount left in your account) are listed.

Title: Helping You Bank
Publisher: The Canadian Banker's Association, 1989
Available: Box 348, Ste. 600, 2 First Canadian Place, Toronto, Ontario, M5X 1E1.
Price: Free
Reviewed by: Barbara Bate
Level: Functional (4-6)

Helping You Bank teaches adults about bank accounts. Topics covered include: how to choose a bank account, how to open a bank account, how to use a bank account, how to make the most of a bank account, interest, and the automated banking machine. In addition, there are sections on banking terms, other banking services, and the chartered banks of Canada.

The book is Canadian-produced. Its friendly cover and good use of graphics and color make it attractive to learners. Large print on plenty of white background is an additional bonus.

It is suggested that instructors/tutors work through the book with learners since each section is quite detailed and the vocabulary can be challenging. The book received favourable reports from both literacy and ESL instructors. They recommend asking learners to bring in forms from their respective banks, so that each adult becomes comfortable with the procedure at his or her bank.

Another suggestion is to invite bank or credit union personnel to visit the class and talk about banking or to take the class to visit a bank or credit union. In either case, the practical applications of this resource are invaluable.

Title: It's Your Right!
Authors: Jim Bell and Marjatta Holt
Available from: Human Rights Directorate, Department of Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0M5
Price: Free
Reviewed by: Laurie Gould
Level: Basic, Functional and Independent

It's Your Right! focuses on those human rights issues that affect the lives of many adult students: employment rights, tenant rights, age, sexual harassment, equal pay, disability, basic rights and freedoms, as well discrimination based on race, colour, and ethnic origin. These materials were designed for use in Canadian Adult Basic Education classes.

The student book consists of eight modules that explore each of these issues in depth. The modules are packaged together in an attractive spiral bound notebook. Careful attention has been given to format, size of print, and white space. The reading level is fairly easy, but the way relevant issues are dealt with on different levels of abstraction makes the book useful for a range of abilities.

A separate teachers' guide has background information on human rights issues and

Sexual Harassment

Equal Pay

Disability

legislation, worthwhile suggestions for use, and some helpful ideas on how to handle sensitive issues in ABE classes.

Instructors and students say *It's Your Right!* is interesting, informative, true to life, and well laid out. Instructors report that the topics generate exciting discussion. Students say they enjoy the interesting variety of materials and exercises. These include letters to newspapers, friends, and employers; statements to and from the Human Rights Commission; an accident report; WCB forms; and crossword puzzles. Although *It's Your Right!* has been used successfully in one-to-one situations, it seems to work best in groups where students can share their experiences and ideas. It is a particularly useful resource to have on hand when one of these human rights issues comes up in class.

Title: Let's Work Safely!
Author: Linda Mrowicki
Publisher: Monarch Books
Available: Monarch Books Ltd., 5000 Dufferin St., Downsview, Ontario, M3H 5T5. Tel (416) 663-8231. Fax (416) 736-1702
Price: $11.95
Reviewed by: Joan Acosta
Level: Functional (4-6)

Let's Work Safely!, subtitled English Language Skills for Safety in the Workplace, introduces safety concepts as well as the language skills necessary to function safely in the workplace.

The chapters cover proper safety clothing, safety procedures (how to lift and move heavy objects), unsafe working conditions (poor lighting or handling flammable materials), and how to handle accidents. The book gives new workers the language they need to accept safety directions gracefully, clarify directions, complain about unsafe conditions politely yet forcefully, and to insist on getting the safety equipment they need. The pictures allow students the opportunity to recognize unsafe conditions, and the dialogues give them the language they need to insist on safe working conditions.

The book is intended for adult ESL students, but many learners can benefit from the study of generic safety concepts and safety language.

The book was field tested in a number of classes. It was tested in two bridge classes and in a class of mentally handicapped adults reading at a Grade 2-3 level. Students seemed interested in the material and teachers liked "the use of illustrations" and "the simple, straightforward comprehension questions

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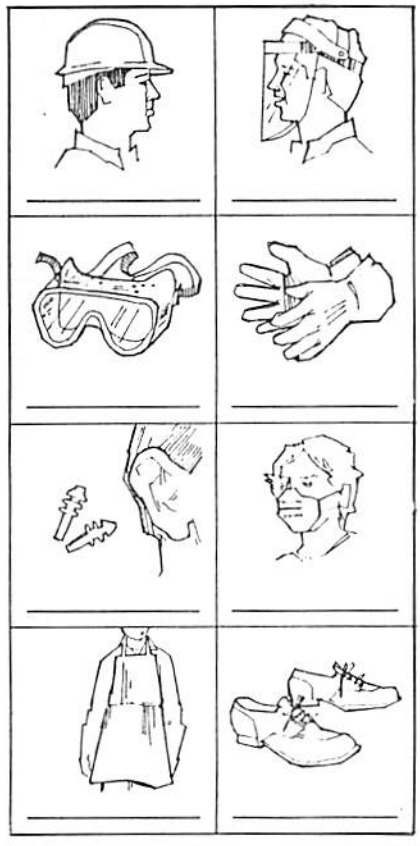
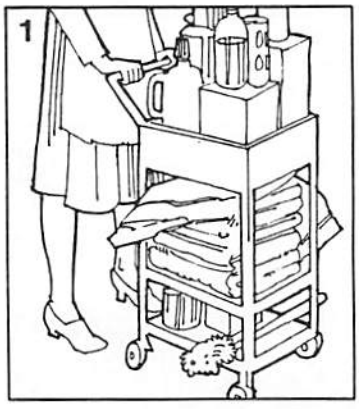
PRACTICE.
Practice the names of the safety clothing.
Write the names.



All the teachers who tested the book said they felt the text became too difficult by the end of the book. Also it was noted that teachers would need to ensure that the safety content accurately reflects the safety rules and practices in the students' workplaces.

There is a slim, spiral-bound Teacher's Book with answers as well as some suggestions for role play and follow-up. It was not field tested for this review.

FILL OUT THE FORMS.
Look at the pictures. What are the unsafe conditions? Fill out the forms using your name and today's date.



NAME: _____ DATE _____

Describe the unsafe working condition:

Suggestions:

SIGNATURE: _____

Title: Some Artists: Their Lives, Loves and Luck
Author: Elsa Marston
Publisher: Cambridge
Available: Prentice Halll Canada, 1870 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, Ontario, M1P 2J7
Price: $5.00
Recommended by: Laurie Gould
Reviewed by: Loraine Wong
Level: Functional (4-6)

This little book was the result of a 1983 project by Literacy Volunteers of America to "produce humanities material for adult new readers." The book is a collection of short articles about artists, their lives, and styles. Care has been taken to include artists from many countries and time periods, with an emphasis on the struggles and problems that the artists encountered. There is also a simple explanation of the different styles of the artists.

From the attractive cover and the title, readers would expect the book to have many illustrations. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. The book is entirely print, with no visual relief. For a new reader, the amount of text would likely be overpowering. The language is also rather stilted and unnatural, and students may have difficulty keeping their interest alive.

Despite these drawbacks, the book can be useful in a class or tutoring situation. Students who are already interested in art might choose the book for pleasure reading. Other students may find this an effective way of working with a subject matter that might have been threatening in the past. One student/tutor pair used the book as an introductory lesson to a visit to an art gallery. Another student reported, "I always thought this was something I couldn't understand. I'm happy that I read this, and now I'm going to try some classical music."

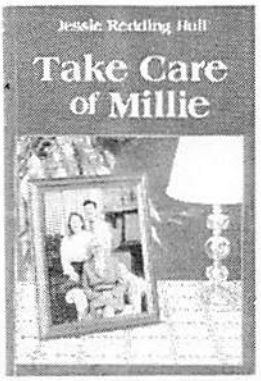
ARTISTS
- **Caravaggio**
- **Rembrandt**
- **Paul Gauguin**
- **Vincent Van Gogh**
- **Benjamin West**
- **John James Audubon**
- **James Whistler**
- **Kathe Kollwitz**
- **Berthe Morisot**
- **Grandma Moses**

Title: The Sundown Books
Publisher: New Readers Press
Available: Artel Educational Resources, 5528 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C. V5H 2G2. Tel: 435-4949. Fax: 435-1955
Price: Books $6.50 each, Study Pack (10 Study Guides and one Teacher's Guide) -$16.75 each, tapes $26.95 (available for each book).
Reviewed by: Andrew Kennedy
Level: Functional (4-6)

The Sundown Fiction Collection consists of 25 novels written at low reading levels. The books present quality fiction and deal with a broad range of real life topics. Each book tells the story of a person who must deal with a conflict or challenge in realistic situations such as mental illness, physical or learning disabilities, returning to school, looking for work, coping with alcoholism or marital problems, and a range of other issues. Most of the stories are set in recent times, but several stories have a historical setting such as slavery and the Underground Railroad. The books are 50 to 100 pages in length and include several dramatic illustrations. Unfortunately, the references and settings are American.

Students have both positive and negative reactions to the books. Many students read the books with great interest and said that they did not want to put down the book, and that they could identify with the character in the book or that they learned from the story. Other students find the stories depressing and are not interested in reading them. However, most students find the books easy to read and recommend them to others. Some of the books field tested and recommended are: *Just Once, A Dream with Storms, Lady in Pink, Better Off Without Me, Nobody Wants Annie, In and Out the Windows*, and *Take Care of Millie.*

The novels are probably best for independent study or for leisure reading. The subject matter can provide good material for class discussions or writing assignments. I did not review the study packs and the tapes, but the study packs include comprehension questions and writing exercises which could provide a deeper study of each book. In general, the appearance and content of the Sundown Series will appeal to many students.



Everything she had done for Jan as a child, Jan did for her now – and more. As a child, Jan had freedom. Sure, Millie had worried about the first bike, the first date, the first times she drove. But she had let go of her daughter when the time came.

Love between Millie and Jan was strong. But, now, it was a hurting thing. They were both choking back feelings. Jan was tense, nervous, bossy. Millie hid her feelings because she didn't want Jan to get more upset and tense.

Being told what to do wasn't new to Millie. George had ruled the roost during their marriage. So many times she had denied her own feelings and given in to him. And, now, it was Jan.

From *Take Care of Millie*

Title: Sweetgrass
Author: Jan Hudson
Publisher: Tree Frog Press, 10144-89 St., Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1P7
Price: $7.95
Reviewed by: Paula Davies
Level: Independent (7-9) or read aloud to Basic (0-3) or Functional (4-6)

This novel tells the story of Sweetgrass, a 15-year-old Blood girl, and her struggle to become a woman. It is set in southern and south central Alberta during the early 19th century. While the work is fiction, it is based on written records of the winter of 1837-1838.

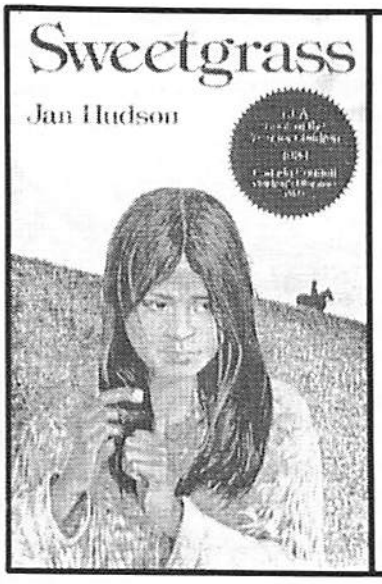
While telling what is essentially a love story, the author carefully conveys a myriad of historical and cultural information that could be used as a springboard into a theme unit on various aspects of native studies.

The love story plot makes for high interest reading. As one student reviewer commented, "I started reading the book yesterday and couldn't put it down. Finally I had to go and do my homework!"

Another student reviewer commented positively on the use of descriptive language and the author's choice of words that are easy to understand.

In terms of weaknesses, the novel has been written for children. This fact may insult some readers. One student who read the book stated that he "felt like a kid reading it." As well, the author is not a native, thus placing this novel in the currently controversial category of being about native people, but not by them.

These concerns aside, *Sweetgrass* was commented on favorably by a variety of student reviewers. They found it to be interesting, easy to read and understand, and informative.



Each day we would camp by a new patch of saskatoons. Slowly we moved west across the plains to our Sun Dance camp under the Belly Buttes, almost in the shadow of the mountains. The women would pick and dry berries for the winter while the men would talk and trade together, maybe smoke a bit. Later they might hunt a little.

From *Sweetgrass*

Title: How Two-Feather Was Saved from Loneliness
Author: C.J. Taylor
Publisher: Tundra Books
Available: Bookstores
Price: $12.95
Recommended by: Lorraine Fox
Reviewed by: Loraine Wong
Level Functional (4-6)

The Abenaki legend of the first gifts of fire and corn is retold here as a poignant love story, wonderfully illustrated with colourful paintings. C.J. Taylor has woven a story of love and magic, recounting Two-Feather's loneliness and first meeting with the Corn Goddess. As his love for the Goddess grows, Two-Feather follows her on a long journey. Unable to stay with Two-Feather, the Goddess creates fire and corn as a gift to him, making communal life easier, and so saving Two-Feather from loneliness.

The story is told in simple, descriptive language with effective use of direct speech. The illustrations

are bright and striking and add a richness to the book.

The book may at first appear to be a child's book. One student did report that he felt offended by being given a "kid's book". An introduction or explanation of legends and storytelling might offset this reaction.

Most students in both native and non-native centres enjoyed the book. One class even discussed why Two-Feather was not used as a plural.

Other comments included:

- *It's short and easy to read, and I really liked the pictures.*
- *Because the story is short, you could remember it and tell it when in circle or at sweat.*
- *Good pictures to emphasize the growing season.*
- *I liked reading about the author. It's important that the author is native.*

Title: Enwhisteetkwa
Author: Jeanette C. Armstrong
Publisher: Okanagan Indian Curriculum Project, 1988
Available: Theytis Books, P.O. Box 218, Penticton, B.C. V2A 5P9
Price: $5.95
Reviewed by: Lorraine Fox
Level: Functional (4-6) Independent (7-9)

Enwhisteetkwa has a glossy cover with the author's biography on the back and an illustration on the front incorporating the colours of the four directions. These colours — red, yellow, black and white — are intrinsic to many native cultures. The author is also responsible for inside illustrations.

The story is told to us by a young Okanagan girl named Enwhisteetkwa. We learn about the traditions of the Okanagan people and follow their daily lives with the unfolding of each of the four seasons.

Their activities include food gathering and preparation, crafting and repair of household items, delighting in and respecting nature, and observing the traditional ceremonies and legends of the Okanagan people.

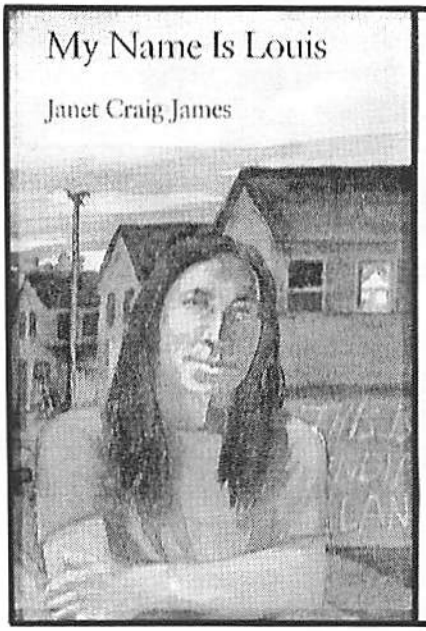
This material could be used as a component of native studies, as a theme unit (native cultures of B.C.) or as reading material. It works with native learners because it was written by an Okanagan native woman who is able to bring us a genuine picture of the traditional life of her culture. As well, the language is at a level that is easily understood by accomplished readers and would be suitable for new learners, if assisted.

It is enjoyable to non-native readers as it offers a look into a lifestyle that is often mysterious and it does this in plain language.

The learners who used this book did not express any weaknesses and felt it to be an excellent example of written native material.

The song was soft. It reminded me of wind through pine trees. I listened as I watched my grandmother's fingers flying in and out of the hemp and tule bag she was weaving. They were like little brown birds. The fire was crackling and curling light and smoke pictures everywhere. I was warm and dream hearing. My grandmother's soft voice was singing to me of Ska-Loo-La, the wicked owl woman waiting to catch bad little girls. She wanted me to be good and clean and respectful so Ska-Loo-La wouldn't get me.

From *Enwhisteetkwa*



When she marked the register and called them by name, they hooted when she said,

'Lewis Robillard?'

Louis' mutter, 'Loo-eee," was drowned by cat calls and *'Lewis*!', 'Hey, *Lewis*!' Even the girls joined in the fun. Miss McIver tried to call the class to order but it was no use.

From *My Name is Louis*

Title: My Name is Louis
Author: Janet Craig James
Publisher: Penumbra Press, 1990
Available: Bookstores
Price: $9.95
Reviewed by: Basha Rahn
Level: Independent (7-9)

My Name is Louis begins as a story about the anger of a native Indian youth against local land development in his small northern Ontario community. In a landscape ruined by intruders, Louis is also suffering a troubled relationship with his father and the poor health of his mother. With his neighbor, who was at first the enemy, Louis learns to share his private passion for drawing and painting. This friendship leads to possibilities for moving to the city to pursue his career and gain respect as a man and as an artist. Louis has difficult choices to make.

This book is beautifully written for readers at an independent level. Some readers thought it was an accurate portrayal of the turbulence of adolescent years. One reader expected violence between natives and non-natives to develop at any moment and when it didn't, he felt the approach was positive. The ending is not a pat, happy one and it leaves questions for thought and discussion. The themes are topical and the book can be used as part of an English curriculum or with native studies. However, the language is difficult for new readers.

Chapter head lettering by Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald and the watercolor cover art by Judy Pennanen contribute to the appeal of this book.

Title: RECLAIM Bibliography of Canadian High-Interest, Low-Level Novels for Adults, 1990 edition
Author: Rosalie Bean
Available: RECLAIM, 3449 University Avenue, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2AB
Price: Free
Level: (1-4), (4-8)
Reviewed by: Thomas Quigley

Finding Canadian material to use with adult literacy students is an ongoing task, and this work by Rosalie Bean is very useful for doing just that. The two books are the product of a project sponsored by the Reading Council for Literacy Advance (RECLAIM) with joint funding from the Quebec Provincial Government and the National Literacy Secretariat. Bean only includes Canadian-produced reading material in the form of novels, short story collections, self-help guides, poetry or plays. Books that focus on, or include, skill-building exercises are not listed. All texts were rated for readability using the Gunning-Fox Readability Index.

Each volume is arranged by reading level; the second volume actually starts at 4.4, not 4. The first volume has 79 entries; the second, 65. All entries include author/title and publishing

information, level, length, and an annotation. The annotation gives a summary of the book's content, and includes comments on format, and the presence of illustrations and vocabulary/new words aids. There is no indication of availability. At the back of each volume there is a list of the publishers' addresses cited in the particular volume: 17 in volume 1; 24 in volume 2. There are only 8 publishers listed in both volumes. The majority of the material included is student writing published by local community literacy councils or programs. There are only a few items from commercial publishers. While some titles will be only of local interest, others will appeal to students anywhere in Canada. There is a good mix of collections and individual authors. Most material listed was published in the mid-1980's, but the second volume has a strong selection of items published in the 1970's.

Death Over Montreal Level 4.7

Geoffrey Bilson 106 pages
Kids Can Press
Toronto (1982)

The Douglas family comes to Canada to seek their fortune and to escape the deadly cholera epidemic which was spreading across Europe. But life in Montreal is more difficult than they had ever imagined. Cholera had beaten them to Canada! Seen through the eyes of teenager Jamie Douglas, the story paints a picture of Montreal life in the mid-ninteenth century.

A Child in Prison Camp Level 4.7

Shizuye Takashima 97 pages
Tundra Books
Montreal, P.Q. (1971)

Even though this book has won international awards for "children's literature", it is worthwhile reading for adults, as well. As an adult, the author records in words and paintings what it was like to be a child in an internment camp, 30 years earlier. It is a beautiful story, simply, told, of the triumph of the human spirit.

Speak Out Level 4.7

An Anthology of Stories 122 pages
by Youth in Care
Edited by Michael Fay
Pape Adolescent Resource Center
Toronto, Ontario (1989)

These stories and poems were written by literacy students who are in a social service program which helps them make the transition from care of the services to independence. The stories spring from the inner souls of the writers, bringing us their pain, their anger and their reality. The language is rich, realistic and, at times, hard-hitting. A must-read for anyone who wants to make a better world!

The guest review for this issue is by Linda Forsythe, an instructor for Douglas College at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women.

Title: When Words Are Bars
Author: Marianne Paul
Available: Core Literacy, 58 Queen Street South, Kitchener, Ontario. N1G 1V6.
Tel: (519) 743-6090
Price: Handbook $10.50; Package (including handbook and modules) $17.50
Reviewed by: Linda Forsythe

When Words Are Bars is an excellent handbook for literacy people wanting to work within correctional institutions. The information is set out in an easy-to-read, very accessible manner. Each major topic is dealt with in a separate chapter with a summary box and resource list at the end.

The first chapter gives a detailed description of what literacy workers will encounter when working in

jails, touching upon the physical drabness of the setting to the general needs of literacy students and the specific needs of those in jails. Paul states that these situations "require patience, creativity, sensitivity to the perspective of others, and at times, compromise."

Paul makes a case for understanding that people in jail are part of our community and, after varying lengths of time, will be returned to it. This is a rationale for community-based literacy projects working with prisons. The author goes on to address the stereotypes and fears the community has of offenders.

Literacy tutoring is most effective when it is learner centered and driven. The third chapter describes all the ways of delivery using this approach, from re-writing materials, to one-to-one tutoring, to family literacy.

The book describes the nuts and bolts of putting a program together— from the specifics of any given institution to advertising, training, resources, and issues of confidentiality and protocol. The author knows well the issues and problem that can be encountered.

The last chapter looks at the issues revolving around release — whether the literacy work continues, gets transferred to another group or gets dropped. Finally, Paul has assembled a list of facts, definitions and resources.

I found the book to be extremely readable, accurate, and interesting. It's a useful tool for anyone wanting to work within the prison system.

The guide reviewed here is part of a tutor training package consisting of 15 modules designed to prepare literacy tutors to work in correctional institutions. You can examine the package by borrowing it from the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development or by visiting the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.

Committee News

Helping Promote B.C. Books

The Literacy Materials Committee has recently agreed to participate in the production of a new brochure promoting B.C. books to the literacy community. This brochure is a follow-up to the successful *B.C. Books Celebrating International Literacy Year* brochure and is being coordinated by Thomas Quigley of the Vancouver Public Library.

The Committee's May '91 meeting was purposefully held at the Association of Book Publishers of B.C. office and showroom so that committee members could review publishers' materials for suitable in-print titles.

The new brochure is expected to appear this Fall. Other partners in the new brochure project include Benwell Atkins, Ltd., B.C. Library Association's Library-Literacy Link Project, the western office of the Canadian Book Information Centre, and Literacy B.C.

Out and About

We have received requests from several programs to review their materials. This spring, four members of the committee volunteered to take a day and visit two of the programs.

Saanich Visit

Basha Rahn and Andrew Kennedy visited the Program of Alphabet Literacy (PALS) in Saanich, a computer-based literacy instruction program, to view software recommended by the staff of the PALS program as "excellent educational software for literacy program." The software is used with learners of varying ages (high school students and adults). The software, all for IBM MS DOS based systems, is as follows:

- IBM Spelling Series Levels 2 and 3
- IBM Reading for Information Levels 2, 3 and 4
- IBM Reading for Meaning Levels 1, 2 and 3
- IBM Combining Sentences Levels 2, 3 and 4
- Wizard of Words

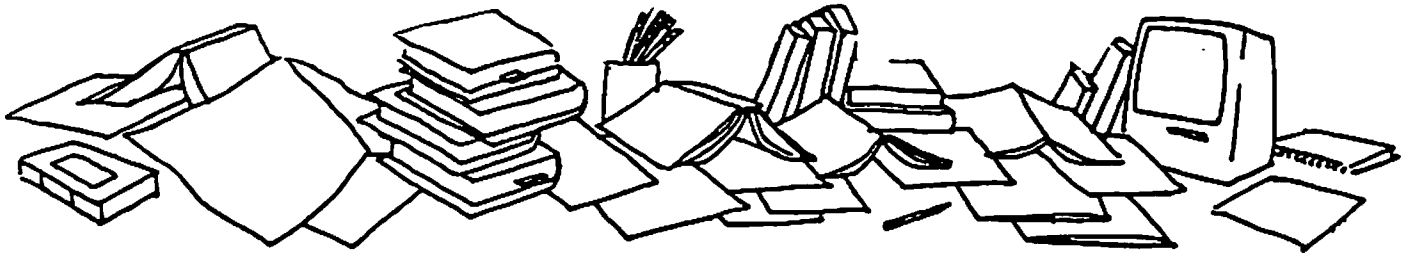
The material, essentially a workbook on computer, uses a cognitive approach (write short answers, read and answer questions or find information, mark the word). The software makes use of graphics and audio components as well as games. Each program has something to recommend either in presentation or content, but each also has weaknesses such as confusing stories or unclear directions.

After reviewing some of the software, Basha and Andrew strongly suggest that if used, it should be in conjunction with other materials and with teacher direction.

For more information about the PALS program call Lloyd Falconer at 652-3122.

Kwantlen Visit

Laurie Gould and Barbara Bate visited Kwantlen College's Surrey campus to learn about ABE instructor Gary Miller's reading program. Gary devoted the better part of the day explaining his method of instruction to his visitors. He uses an intensive, one-to-one, programmed phonics approach, modelled after the work of his mentor, Ruth Worden Frank's *The Phonetic Reading Chain.* Gary is very positive about the success of his program and invites others who are interested in this approach to reading to contact him at 599-2238.



RECOMMENDED LITERACY MATERIALS REVIEW

Title _____
Author _____
Publisher _____ Copyright Date _____

Where is it available? _____ Level (please circle)
***Basic(Gr.0-3)** ****Functional(Gr.4-6)** *****Independent(Gr.7-9)**

Please be as specific as possible in describing the material. If reviewing print material, please attach a photocopy of the table of contents and a sample page of the text to assist us in evaluating the material.

1. Describe the material _____

2. How do you use it? _____

3. Why does it work with learners? _____

4. What are the weaknesses, if any? _____

Please feel free to elaborate on any aspect of this material. Use the other side of this form for additional comments. Submissions should be sent to:

Joan Acosta
Capilano College
2055 Purcell Way
North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 3H5

Recommended by: _____ _____

(name) (institution)